

LARRY
NIE'S

MONSTERS *and* HEROES

ACHE

No. 6

35¢



FLASH GORDON

The World of
JOHN CARTER



LARRY
IVIE'S

No. 6

MONSTERS and HEROES

THE MAGAZINE OF PICTORIAL IMAGINATION

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Contents

Burroughs. . . . 4
Altron-Boy 8

Flash Gordon . . . 14
Al Williamson. . . 40

Amateur Films. . . 44
Letters 48

Photo: Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers in "Flash Gordon"



BELOW, Bruno Wick, the Ming of the old Flash Gordon radio program, as he appeared in one of his movie roles. He has also played character parts on TV.



WELL, there go our carrier bats on their month-long journey to deliver issue #5 to the stands. And before they even get there, we must start turning the handle on our printing press to have issue #6 ready by the time they get back.

As usual, your letters have determined the contents for this issue. And in keeping with our FLASH GORDON theme, we can't help but mention a few items that were not mentioned in our main article. First is the beautiful LARGE hardcover book which reprints over two and a half years' worth of the original Flash Gordon newspaper strip by Alex Raymond. If your local stores have sold out of this, it can still be obtained for \$11.95 from Nostalgia Press, Box 293 Franklin Square, NYC. This is an item well worth the price to all fans of adventure art. Second, is the \$2 record album, available in most large record shops, featuring the voice of Buster Crabbe as Flash. The Al Williamson drawing for the cover of this (see our article on Al in this issue) is reproduced below. Al also wrote one of the two stories featured in the album, although, for some reason, this is not mentioned on the jacket. (The other—a very poor story featuring Ming—was taken from the worst period of the old Flash Gordon comic books.)

Speaking of Ming, however, many Flash Gordon fans may not be aware that an actor other than Charles Middleton (see our article) was once associated with the part. Shown in the photo below is BRUNO WICK—one of the best liked actors in the profession—who portrayed Ming on the old Flash Gordon RADIO series. The part of Flash, in this series, was played by a young actor whose last name, appropriately, WAS Gordon—Gale Gordon (which leads one to ponder over the first name, also, considering that Flash supposedly graduated from YALE!) In recent years, Gale Gordon (now a little old for a heroic image) has become well known in comedy roles—most currently on the Lucy shows. And, just for the sake of being complete, we might as well also at least mention the extremely low-budget made-for-TV series of Flash Gordon which appeared briefly in the mid-'fifties. The star of this very forgettable effort was Steve Holland, who is today the model for the strange interpretation of Doc Savage on the current pocketbook covers.



Section One

MONSTERS

THE MONSTERS of MARS



One of the most famous monsters in literature is the THARK. There are undoubtedly some people reading this who have never heard of a Thark; yet even they will certainly be familiar with Tarzan of the Apes. Both were the creation of the same author—Edgar Rice Burroughs. Within his lifetime, Burroughs became the world's largest selling author. And his career started with a tale about Mars. The hero of this story, who came from Earth, was named John Carter; and the first beings which Carter encountered upon Mars were the giant green Tharks. (Tharks were actually just one nationality of the giants. The same species was known by other names also, depending upon their region of origin. But since the Tharks were the most important to John Carter, we'll use their name, here, as a generic term for the green men in general.)

Tarzan of the Apes was the third book by Burroughs to appear; and from then on everything written by Burroughs—both past and present—was eagerly sought after by readers around the world. Tarzan was soon converted into motion pictures (although Burroughs was always disappointed with the adaptations) and his name soon became a household word. But readers were anxious for more adventures of John Carter as well, and Burroughs did not let them down. Over the years, he continued to add to the sagas of Mars, and produced a total of eleven books in the series before ill health brought his writing career to an untimely conclusion.

It was only recently, however, that film-makers began to feel that John Carter and the Tharks might also be adaptable to the screen. The Disney studios had presented a brief Thark segment on TV, but had not seriously considered the subject for a full-length movie. Then, several years ago, another producer did. The word soon spread through the amateur science fiction and fantasy publications, and everyone cheered. They, naturally, envisioned a talented model animator—perhaps Ray Harryhausen—doing the special effects, and delighted in thoughts of having an exciting break from common movie scenes, such as men on horseback, in the form of awesome views of six-limbed Tharks astride their eight-legged thoats. BUT, it was soon announced that the producer had a few slight changes in mind. The giant green men would be reduced to the size of ordinary people, and have only two arms! And instead of riding their famous eight-legged mounts, they would ride HORSES!

Was there really a producer so devoid of awareness that he could think of filming the story of John Carter without Tharks and thoats? If so, he apparently realized his mistake from the reactions, for the project was abandoned.

Exactly how hard would it REALLY be to do it right? We decided to find out for ourselves—by FILMING one of these difficult scenes. Step ONE (that covered by this first article on the subject) was to design a WORKABLE version of a Thark.

Many illustrators have attempted to show rharks. Aside from the Disney TV segment, and the illustrations in the books themselves, there has been a John Carter newspaper strip, several different comic book series, illustrations in science fiction magazines, and even an illustrated school text book showing Tharks. But all of these have served only to confuse the reader's image of the creature, for NONE of them followed the actual descriptions.

WHAT was the problem? Burroughs had described these famous creatures quite clearly. But the artists had taken only a few statements of the descriptions, and ignored all the rest. Most have made the tall, thin creatures far too short, and moved the intermediary set of limbs (which were used as both arms AND legs, at will) too close to the upper limbs. WHY did none of the artists draw REAL Tharks?

The primary reason was probably that Tharks are really quite awkward in both size and construction, and would be hard to portray in believable relation to ordinary-sized people. So the artists, unwilling to meet the challenge, ignored the books, and invented their own creatures, instead, for the drawings. So, for our project of attempting to create a REAL Burroughs Thark, the works of all previous artists had to be ignored.

BELOW—The skull of the creature envisioned by Burroughs was probably somewhat as shown here.



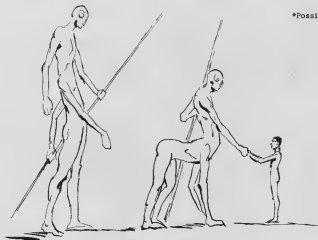
The REAL Tharks, as millions of readers know, were up to sixteen feet tall. Most artists have forgotten, however, that they are capable of assuming centaur-like positions, which overcomes much of the size difference between Thark and man. But how heavily built are they? Most artists have made them quite muscular, or even fat. But, according to biological theory, considering the gravity of Mars, Martian creatures, if any, would tend to be quite tall, and quite skinny.



A clue to the bulk of the Thark is given in the following narration, by John Carter, of his first contact with one: "He (one of the 15 ft. Tharks) unclasped an enormous metal armlet, and holding it toward me in the open palm of his hand, addressed me in a clear, resonant voice... I advanced and took the armlet from his open palm, clasping it about my arm above the elbow." The wrist of a Thark, then, is hardly thicker than the upper arm of a six foot man; OR, the structure of the armlet was such that it could overlap to a smaller size.

The only clue given by Burroughs is his statement that this Thark, on Earth, would weigh only four hundred pounds. Not much at all for a being fifteen feet high. In the words of John Carter, "While the Martians are immense, their bones* are very large, and they are muscled only in

proportion to the gravitation which they must overcome. The result is that they are infinitely less agile and less powerful, in proportion to their weight, than an Earth man, and I doubt that were one of them suddenly to be transported to Earth he could lift his own weight from the ground; in fact, I am convinced that he could NOT do so."



*Possibly hollow, as those of birds.

BECAUSE Burroughs' descriptions are so detailed, the things he does NOT say are as important as what he does. Anything of importance about the Tharks which was not basically human in nature would undoubtedly be mentioned. And, therefore, can be eliminated from consideration if not. The Tharks of the more recent comic books, for instance, were quite round and frog-like in appearance. If this image had been in Burroughs' mind, he most certainly would have made mention of these characteristics. The head of the Martion CALOT (see lower corner of illustration on back cover) WAS described as frog-like.



But, for the purposes of our film, the trial illustrations on these pages were only the beginning. Next would come working models of both Thark and a proportionately sized man, to see if this design would WORK. If, through trick photography, this design of a Thark was placed in proper scale to a real person, would it be able to relate properly for the actions required?

Through trial and error—in addition to again restudying the descriptions and actions in the books—slight variations were made here and there, and work on the FINAL Thark models—the ones for the film—began. But, would it be WORTH it, to bring a REAL Thark to "life" for the first time? Would it look as awesome and dynamic as Burroughs meant it to in the mood of his books, or only silly and awkward? As of this writing, part of the filming has been completed, with quite encouraging results. The FINAL scenes will be shown at future gatherings of Burroughs fans, and printed in a future issue of Monsters & Heroes for ALL to see. Our aim, of course, is to prove to Hollywood that the works of Burroughs—AS WRITTEN—CAN be done, as millions of Burroughs fans, for the past fifty years, have been hoping they would be.



ALTRON BOY

and the FUMES of TERROR!



AFTER SABOTAGING A CHEMICAL REACTION SO THAT IT WOULD BLOW THE VILLANOUS VOLTAGE FORTRESS COMPLETELY OFF THE MAP, A SCIENTIST THEN LEARNS THAT VOLTAR HAS BROUGHT HIS YOUNG DAUGHTER PRISONER TO THE FORTRESS AS A HOSTAGE.

HEATHEN'S FRIEND DAVE, MEANWHILE, SEARCHES FOR ANOTHER OF VOLTAR'S PRISONERS ---

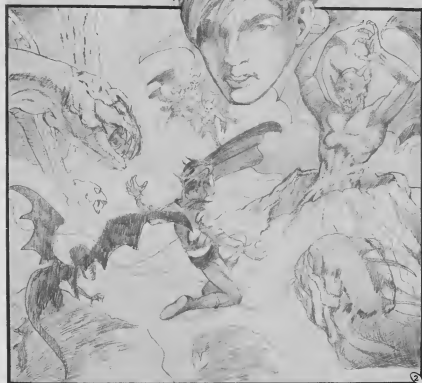
HEX MUST BE IN ONE OF THESE CHAMBERS. HEY--THERE'S HEATHEN'S FATHER. THAT MUST BE THE CHEMICAL LAB HE MENTIONED!

TOO LATE TO STOP THE REACTION. BUT IT'S STILL A LONG WAY FROM FULL FORCE. IF I IGNITE IT NOW.....!

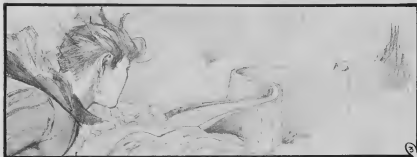
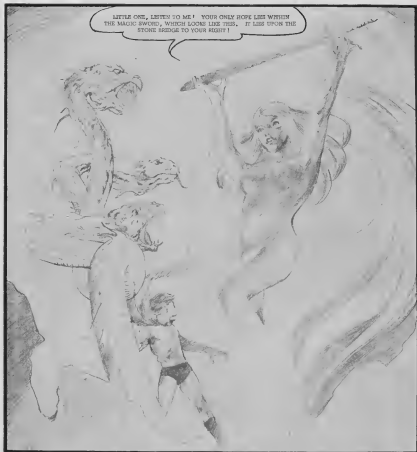
HEY--WHAT'S HE...
OH, NO!

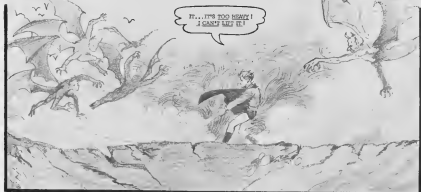
BOOM!

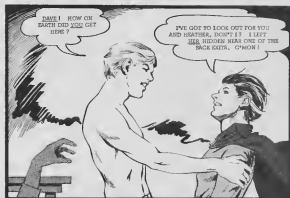
SUDDENLY THE NEARBY CORRIDORS ARE FLOODED WITH FUMES FROM THE EXPLOSION ---



LITTLE ONE, LISTEN TO ME! YOUR ONLY HOPE LIES WITHIN
THE MAGIC SWORD, WHICH LOOKS LIKE THIS. IT LIES UPON THE
STONE BRIDGE TO YOUR RIGHT!







Section Two

HEROES



FLASH GORDON



Because of TV, and its frequent airing of the three old Universal Flash Gordon serials, there are few fans of adventure who are unfamiliar today with the voyage to the planet Mongo by Flash Gordon, Dale Arden, and Dr. Zarkov. ...How they encountered the sinister Ming The Merciless, were befriended by Thun the Lion Man, and how Princess Aura, Ming's daughter, fell in love with Prince Barin, rightful heir to the throne of Mongo.

The adventures of Flash Gordon, however, were only slightly more amazing than the legend of his talented creator.

While other strip artists of the day were setting a standard of art so simple that real work in strips seemed virtually unnecessary, Raymond constantly produced a pain-staking, time-consuming reality that never compromised with his own idealistic standards of quality. When not thrilling his readers with predictions of such things as television, atom bombs, jet and rocket aircraft, he was doing so with his remarkable artistic industry.

Alex Raymond has been considered one of the greatest masters of true drawing. His pen sketches, paintings, and magazine illustrations could fill a volume in themselves. But Raymond was also a story teller. And for



TRAPPED
IN A HUGE TREE
IN THE FORESTS
OF BARIN: THE THREE
EARTHLINGS FIGHT
OFF A FLOOD OF MAD
SQUIRLONS...A SINGLE
BITE MEANS MADNESS/.....

Illustration copyright King Features Syndicate

ten years out of his relatively brief 46, he devoted himself to a saga which has already become one of the most popular our century has known. He began his career as an apprentice to well-known cartoonists who lived near by, working first on the strip Tillie The Toller, and then Chic Young's Blondie. As his ability improved, he began to aid Chic's brother, Lyman Young, on the more realistic feature Tim Tyler's Luck.

Then he was given the opportunity to do the art on a daily strip to be written by the famous mystery writer Dashiell Hammett--Secret Agent X-9. The syndicate had actually wanted the also-famous illustrator Matt Clark for this first truly realistic competitor for Dick Tracy, but Clark refused. The young Alex Raymond, however, who had already been chosen for a new Sunday page, industriously trained himself, and launched the feature with a style amazingly close to that of the renowned artist. Instead of a Sunday page for the feature, King Features had decided that the Sunday space should be devoted to two entirely different types of features. And so, for the top half of the page was created the character Jungle Jim; and for the bottom, Flash Gordon. At this time, Raymond was only 23.

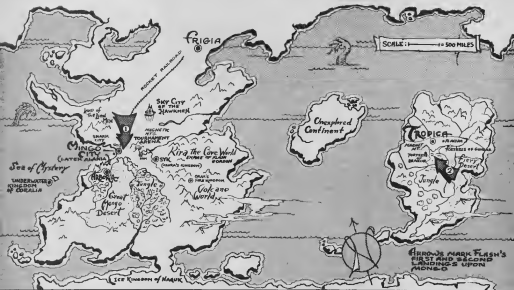
All three of Raymond's characters--not just Flash--were made into movie serials; and both of the Sunday features were made into radio adventure programs. It soon became obvious, however, which of the three creations had the greatest public appeal, and it was not long before Flash expanded to two-thirds of the page he shared with Jungle Jim. At this time, Raymond was required to produce a total of forty eight complete drawings every week. And aside from the hand lettering, much of which was done by his uncle, Raymond never let others touch the drawings to which he signed his name. In the several instances when he got so far behind schedule that another artist had to work on Flash, that artist received a complete page which Raymond himself never touched. The artist who did these extra pages for him was Austin Briggs--one of today's "Twelve Famous Artists"--to whom Raymond eventually turned over the daily strip, in order to devote more time to Flash. And the date on which Raymond reduced his work load is easy to spot. With the very next Sunday page, Flash suddenly sprang from the realm of a well drawn strip into an artistic masterpiece.

What were the inspirations for Flash Gordon? There is almost no creative effort which does not have a lengthy train of influences. And yet those for Flash Gordon--those that industrious research has been able to uncover--are remarkably few. Raymond's own fertile imagination seems to have been the major source for most of the ideas within his remarkable illustrative concepts. The silent film of Siegfried (see Monsters & Heroes #2) perhaps set the pattern for Raymond's usage of Flash--and certainly for the invisibility sequence in one story. Another silent film--Metropolis--was reflected in an underwater adventure, in both the costume worn by Queen Urdina of Corallia, and in one of the machines used by her men (which somehow got transported to King Vultan's furnace room in the first Flash Gordon movie serial.) And Dr. Zarkov's rocketship in the serial was not based upon a design within the strip by Raymond, but on an earlier one used in a movie titled Just Imagine. The ironic part of this is that the ship in Just Imagine was inspired by a drawing which appeared in the rural strip Buck Rogers! But, then, Buck HAD begun in the papers first, and this was, perhaps, a just tribute to this fact. Aside from its space-travel aspects, however, there were really never any major similarities between the original versions of these two rivals. Flash was in the present, not the future, and took place almost entirely upon one planet--Mong. There is evidence that several other movies and classic paintings were inspirations for scenes in Flash--as well as one scene from a Flash serial. But somewhere in the work of Raymond is there evidence of a direct copy from the work of another artist; and every figure he drew was in a different pose from all that he had done in the past.



Raymond was one of the first strip illustrators to spend extra time trying to insure greater accuracy in his drawings by posing people for the figures in his strip. It was also Raymond who devised many of the formulas that have been used by comics artists ever since, in interpreting the realistic figure, and the clothing upon that figure. And it was Raymond who introduced the inking style which has been used to the greatest extent in comics illustration since. However, Raymond's boredom with his constant obligations to deadlines was becoming apparent after the beginning of World War II and he entered the service before even completing the current story upon which he was working. But it was his impatience—the seeking of ways to lessen his work load—that presented the world of realistic cartooning with virtually its entire manual of formulas. And at no time—even his periods of simplest inking—did Raymond ever compromise on the actual drawing beneath that inking, in either quality or originality.





ABOVE, a map of the planet MONGO, as assembled from the diagrams and information produced by Alex Raymond in the Flash Gordon strip. According to Raymond, Mongo is slightly over one third the diameter of Earth, but has a gravitational density that is almost as great. It's a relatively young world, with towering mountains not yet worn smooth by time, and many areas of volcanic activity; its vegetation is still limited to isolated areas of botanical giants, and it's still in the era of reptilian plants. Man evolved fast and into many races—a number of which possess amazingly advanced technology, while others still live in primitive and unexplored regions.

Raymond's saga of Flash Gordon consists of the following stories:

The Planet Mongo 1934
 Monster Men of Mongo 1934
 The Tournaments of Mongo 1934-35
 With Queens of Mongo 1935
 King of Mongo 1935-36
 The Water World 1936
 The Forest Kingdom 1936-37
 Perils of Mongo 1937-38
 Tyrant of Arctoria 1938
 Return to Arctoria 1938-39
 The Ice Kingdom 1939-40
 Power Men of Mongo 1940
 In The Prisoners of Mongo 1940-41
 Red Sword Invaders (On Earth) 1941
 In The Fortress of Branzor 1942
 The Jungles of Mongo 1942
 In The Furry Desert 1942-43
 In The Mountains of Mongo 1943
 Flash Gordon Triumphant 1944

When MING overthrew the rightful dynasty of Mongo, and proclaimed himself emperor of the planet (a title which a number of kingdoms never did acknowledge) Prince Barin, the legal heir, went into hiding.

During the "Tournament of Death", a competition steeped in tradition in which the victor received empirical immunity, a kingdom of his own, and freedom in the selection of a bride, there was a tie victory between Flash Gordon and Prince Barin—who had entered in disguise. In fear of a planet-wide revolt, Ming was forced to abide by the rules of the tournament, and grant his worst enemies official kingdoms of their own. But the rules were flexible enough for Ming to select the kingdoms, and to impose certain provisions over them. To Flash, he presented the most uninhabitable region of Mongo, while banishing Prince Barin and his followers to the forest region of Arctoria. Ming allowed Barin's followers to build a city there, within the giant tree-tops, but passed a law PROHIBITING THE POSSESSION OF ANY MODERN WEAPON by those living within the boundary of Arctoria.

But this did not stop the heroes, and Ming was eventually defeated. The three visitors from Earth then returned to their home planet for a brief adventure before again returning to the world of Mongo—this time to land on the continent of Tropica.

Flash was still on Tropica when his creator left the strip to become an officer in the Marines, in 1944—slightly over ten years after beginning the feature. And his successors began to fumble the storyline before even completing the adventure that Raymond had almost concluded.

With the exception of Hal Foster's Prince Valiant, there is almost no adventure strip upon the upper levels of quality which is not consciously following the art style and techniques introduced by Raymond. And yet Raymond, aside from pioneering in this field, has been the only one to date not to stagnate—the only one to constantly evolve his style from one level to another, into new realms of exploration. It is this lack of repetition—the ability to look at one year's output and not find a mere repetition of that type of drawing from the year before; to look at one year's naturally evolved style and be able to distinguish it from that of any other year—which has set Raymond apart from most of his followers as a dynamic and LIVING artisan, unquestionably worthy of that immortality which can belong to so few.



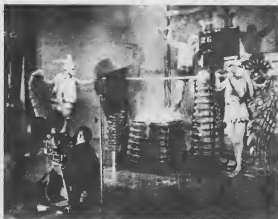
When Raymond returned from military service, he was unable to take over the adventures of Flash once again. The syndicate had signed contracts with other artists and writers. But they pointed out that he would be better off financially by doing a new daily detective strip for them. And thus was born Rip Kirby, which Raymond drew until his death in 1956.

But even on that tragic, rainy day in 1956, there was a certain irony to add fuel to the incredible legend that had been Alex Raymond. The first of the two strips below appeared immediately after the fatal sports car accident which ended his career. And the other, which was to appear three weeks later... was the last strip that he had done.



In 1936, cameras began rolling at Universal Studios on the first of three Flash Gordon movie serials. The first film followed the story of the strip far better than most Hollywood adaptations—the major discrepancy being to make Dale Arden a blond, instead of a brunette, because of the current popularity of Jean Harlow.

BELOW, in front of a rocketship set, the cast of the film stands in costumes based closely upon those drawn by Raymond. INSET PANEL is from the third Flash Gordon Sunday page.





In the years after Alex Raymond left the newspaper strip, the filmed version of Flash was the only one able to retain the original popularity of the character. Although the full panorama of events as conceived by Raymond could not be brought to the screen with the budgets available, the adaptations were still, nevertheless, among—if not THE—most exciting, fast-paced, and elaborate serials ever produced.

So popular have these films been that they have been given PRIME evening TV time in New York and other major cities. In Chicago, the series has been shown constantly for many years, with the audience never seeming to tire of viewing each chapter many times over.

Three stars remained in their parts for all three of the serials—Buster Crabbe as Flash, Frank Shannon as Dr. Zarkov, and Charles Middleton as Ming the Merciless.

The first serial began, as did the strip, with Earth being threatened by the gravitational forces of another planet rushing in an erratic orbit through the solar system. In an attempt to reach the planet, Dr. Zarkov, Flash Gordon, and Dale Arden take off in a rocketship invented by Zarkov. They arrive to discover the alien world inhabited by both monsters and human beings.



Miraculously surviving the crash landing of the rocket, the three Earth people are taken to Ming's palace, where Flash is thrown into the gladiatorial arena for the amusement of the emperor. But Ming's daughter, Aura (played by Priscilla Lawson), intervenes, and enables Flash to escape.







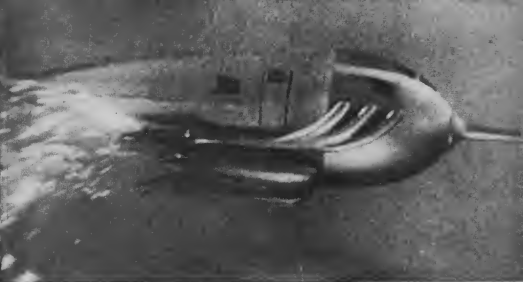
But freedom is short-lived, for Flash and his friends are soon captured by the flying Hawk Men of Mongo, who imprison them as slaves in the furnace room of their floating sky city. (BELOW, Richard Alexander, with shovel, as Prince Barin, and James Pierce as the bearded Thun, king of Mongo's Lion Men.)





Vultan, king of the Hawkmen (portrayed by John Lipson), falls in love with Dale, and tries to get her to agree to their marriage by torturing Flash.





Peril upon peril are faced (ABOVE, one of Ming's rocketships; BELOW, Thun covers Kala, king of the Shark Men, played by Duke York, Jr.), until Ming is seemingly overthrown, and the three from Earth are able to return to their home world.





The third serial (which is more appropriate as a sequel to the first) was the most artistic in sets and costuming—being based upon the later Raymond strips. In this, Flash and his friends return to Mongo in search of an antidote to a plague that is sweeping Earth. There they are greeted by Prince Barin (Roland Drew), in his forest kingdom of Arboria.





Ming still lives, and again a planet-wide odyssey ensues, pitting the resources of Flash and Zarkov against the advanced science of the power-mad tyrant.





They are menaced by Mongo's Rock Men—a tribe of people wearing costumes enabling them to hide amid the boulders of their region—and also by Ming's deadly robot-men.





Although this serial, "Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe" (1940) based its costumes, characters, and locations upon the newspaper feature, it did little to maintain the original story line. ABOVE, Flash assumes the disguise of a soldier to gain entrance to Ming's palace.





Due to the efforts of Flash and his friends, Ming's plans for conquest of the planet Mongo encounter unforeseen difficulties. He pushes forward relentlessly to destroy his enemies, but Prince Barin and the Earthmen continue to survive, and challenge Ming at every turn.





Eventually, Ming's enemies gain the upper hand, and as Barin's ships circle to drop their bombs upon his palace, Ming retreats to a special tower, where it is hinted that an avenue of escape is open to him.





The second Flash serial, "Flash Gordon's Trip To Mars" (1938), was actually filmed out of logical sequence. Ignoring the strip almost completely, with the exception of transferring Queen Azura from Mongo to Mars, this script could logically take place only after the other adventures.





In this serial, Ming, defeated upon Mongo, has flown to the planet Mars to join forces with Queen Azura, who has become ruler of that planet. There, he uses the sciences at his disposal to draw vital elements from Earth's atmosphere. With these, he is able to manufacture deadly Nitron bombs. Tracing the source of Earth's peril, Zarkov heads for Mars.





The captain of Azura's fliers was portrayed by Kane Richmond (shown ABOVE and also BELOW) who later became famous as Spy Smasher, in the movie adaptation of that comic book hero.





Prince Barin (Richard Alexander) has also trailed Ming to Mars, and joins with the others as the action shifts between the desolate forest lands of Mars, Azura's city, and the land of the Clay People. (The story of Azura will be covered in a future issue.) **BELOW**, one of the Martian underground vehicles.







As his enemies begin to close in on him, Ming becomes utterly insane, and plans the senseless annihilation of everyone on Earth, as well as most of Mars. Realizing the threat of Ming's madness, one of his own men traps him in a deadly disintegration chamber, and puts him to death.





THE CHAPTER TITLES

Flash Gordon (1936)

- 1-Planet of Peril
- 2-Tunnel of Terror
- 3-Captured by Shark Men
- 4-Battling the Sea Beast
- 5-The Destroying Ray
- 6-Flaming Torture
- 7-Shattering Doom
- 8-Tournament of Death
- 9-Fighting the Fire Dragon
- 10-The Unseen Peril
- 11-In the Claws of the Tigrion
- 12-Rocketing to Earth

Conquers The Universe (1940)

- 1-The Purple Death
- 2-Freezing Torture
- 3-Walking Bombs
- 4-The Destroying Ray
- 5-Palace of Horror
- 6-Flaming Death
- 7-Land of the Dead
- 8-The Fiery Abyss
- 9-The Pool of Peril
- 10-The Death Mist
- 11-Stark Treachery
- 12-Doom of the Dictator

Trip To Mars (1938)

- 1-New Worlds to Conquer
- 2-The Living Dead
- 3-Queen of Magic
- 4-Ancient Enemies
- 5-The Boomerang
- 6-Tree-Men of Mars
- 7-Prisoner of Mongo
- 8-The Black Sapphire of Kahu
- 9-Symbol of Death
- 10-Incense of Forgetfulness
- 11-Human Bait
- 12-Ming the Merciless
- 13-The Miracle of Magic
- 14-A Beast at Bay
- 15-An Eye For An Eye

The part of Dale Arden was played, in the first serial, by Jean Rogers, who returned—with a more appropriate hair color—to continue the part in Flash Gordon's Trip To Mars. In the third serial to be filmed, the role was played by Carol Hughes. Because of its wide variety of locations and characters, the first film is generally regarded as the best. But, for costuming and pageantry, 'Universe' comes closest to Raymond's later image of Mongo. (Note effective use of shadows, ABOVE, to create added feeling of detail.) Although Flash Gordon's Trip To Mars was the weakest of the three, it is still considered among the best of all the serials ever produced. There is little doubt that the wide popularity of these adventure classics will ensure their continued existence on TV for the entertainment of many generations to come.



Section Three

CREATORS

OF IMAGINATION

AL Williamson



1 Williamson has long been recognized as one of the most talented pen and ink illustrators of our time. Born March 21, 1931, he began his professional art career at the age of 17, as an assistant on the newspaper feature Tarzan. He did the preliminary pencil layouts (see page 42) for those strips appearing Sept. through Nov. 1948. At this point he began to receive work in comic books under his own name, beginning with short stories in Heroic Comics—the first of which appeared in the November 1948 issue.

When we first mentioned our intention to print articles on established artists as well as the talented newcomers, a flood of mail immediately appeared containing suggestions for various artists. And three names received more requests than the combined total for all others (with the possible exception of Hal Foster) put together. These artists are Alex Raymond, Al Williamson, and Frank Frazetta.

During his career, Al has done almost every type of subject matter—science fiction, super heroes, western, war, love, mystery, humor...and has worked for virtually every comic book company that has been in existence since he started—often doing dozens of stories each for approximately 80 titles, in addition to illustrations for other magazines.



Above, an example of Al's superb artwork in his current daily strip, SECRET AGENT COR-RIGAN.

Copyright King Features Syndicate.



Copyright 1964 Len Brown Productions



ABOVE, a newspaper strip sample

During the early fifties, the science fiction stories illustrated by Al Williamson for EC publications were among the most popular items in comic books, and were considered the closest thing around--in either comic books or newspapers--to the beautiful linework of the early Flash Gordon feature as it had been done by Alex Raymond.

And, indeed, it had been Raymond who had most inspired Al, and it was his ambition to someday draw the Flash Gordon Sunday page. The enthusiasm that was evident in his science fiction comic book stories showed his determination to be worthy of such a task, should he ever have the chance.

Although he was usually overworked with either comic book assignments, magazine illustrations, or requests from newspaper illustrators to help them meet deadlines on their strips, Al somehow found the time to begin several strip submissions of his own. And each of them reflected his interest in the type of awe-inspiring scenes that had been the trademark of Alex Raymond's version of Flash Gordon. But most of these samples were never finished. Al was simply too much in demand elsewhere.



THE VERY FIRST professional work of Al Williamson (shown above) was done at the age of 17. It was not long before he had assisted on six of the best drawn newspaper features. Today he is working full time on the strip SECRET AGENT CORRIGAN, (which was begun by Alex Raymond as Secret Agent X-9) under his own name.

BELOW is a sample (from several years ago) of how Al pencils a strip today, in contrast to his above work as a teenager.

today





ABOVE, Al's interpretation of Dr. Zarkov, in a watercolor scene done for practice.

Then, in 1966, Al's ambition was realized. When King Features decided to issue their own comic book of Flash Gordon, there was only one artist truly qualified for the job. Taking time out from his higher paying commitments, Al managed to produce enough Flash Gordon pages for three full issues (issues #1, 4, and 5). It was these that not only brought the name of Al Williamson back to the attention of the world, but brought a whole new generation of readers into renewed interest in Flash Gordon.

Somehow, the world had almost forgotten Flash. There were vague rumors of some strip still carrying the title in newspapers. But a glance at these revealed something so dull and far removed from the exciting Raymond style that a second look was seldom forthcoming. And then, suddenly, Flash came to life once more. For three beautiful issues by Al Williamson, the REAL Flash Gordon lived once again.





VAL WARREN'S

WAR OF THE ROCKETMEN



or some time we've been receiving letters from various amateur film makers across the country regarding rumors of an impressive amateur film titled "War of the Rocketmen". The answer is YES, such a film was made, several years ago, by Val Warren. It's one of a number of amateur films, by different people, inspired by the famous serial "King of the Rocketmen" (which we plan to cover in an upcoming issue). For those who have been curious about Val's production (one of the best amateur films on this theme to date), some scenes from it are shown on the following pages.



BEHIND THE CAMERA,
Mike McDermott, and,
AT RIGHT, Val Warren,
during the production
of Val's film "War of
the Rocketmen".

ON THE NEXT PAGE,
one of the skillful
special effects scenes
produced for the film.

Filmed in color,
Val's Rocketman
jacket is bright red.







With incredible realism, the hero rockets into the path of a criminal henchman. Landing (BELOW), super-science is replaced by the oldest of human weapons, a fist. On the Newburgh-Bacon Bridge, John Santello and Val (as Rocketman) engage in additional combat scenes for the film.





ABOVE, a fitting adversary for the rocketed hero is the major villain of the film, The Black Phantom (played by Don Shay). By use of a 35 pound bat-winged rocket harness, this villain is able to meet the hero on his own ground.

AT LEFT, Joan Tabasco, heroine of the film.



Have YOU made an amateur film on an imaginative subject? If so, let us know.

LETTERS

We always appreciate your help in keeping the magazine as pictorial as possible, by including photos if you can. Please keep in mind that we receive far too much mail to print all that is received. And that the letters that have been represented have been retyped and sometimes shortened.

Address for mail:

Larry Jule
Box 505 Arizona
NYC 10023

Since this is a Flash Gordon issue, it might be appropriate to begin with an answer to a frequently asked question—"What is the music used for the Flash Gordon serials; is it a classical piece that can be obtained on records?" The answer is that SEVERAL sources provided the familiar dramatic themes now associated with Flash Gordon. One of these is Les (pronounced Lay) Preludes, by Franz Liszt. Another is Tchaikowsky's Romeo and Juliet Overture. Both of these are easily available on records. Not so available is the dramatic marching theme, first used for the film Bride of Frankenstein. The only way to obtain this, at the moment, is with a tape recorder in front of the TV set. The serials themselves, however, have far less background noise than the Frankenstein film. Still more of the music comes from the film Werewolf of London.



It finally happened! I've found a fantasy-monster-hero magazine of a high quality. I've been a fan of Filmland for many years, but when the quality of the other magazines faded out, there was nowhere to turn. Then, one day I strutted into a local book store and there it was—a copy of Monsters and Heroes. I don't plan to miss a copy.

Dan Chager Warren, Ohio

But what is the fantasy-monster-hero magazine of high quality you're referring to? At least you found the secret of making sure you don't miss the next copy of M&H. Those with photos printed get free copies!

Do you still have copies of your first issue available at \$1? The nearest book issue dealer to me is charging \$4, which I can't afford.

Jim Chizmak Brooklyn, N.Y.

BACK ISSUES: Although our original supply of all issues has sold out, we are occasionally able to get additional small quantities from dealers, and will continue to take orders for the first three issues at \$1 each—filling them as soon as possible, in the order received—until it is no longer possible to obtain and send them First Class and in envelopes at this price.

You shouldn't feel so bad about a name coming out misspelled in the King Kong article. (If you hadn't corrected it next issue, I wouldn't have even noticed.) At least you got the correct person. It wasn't too long ago that the most "Famous" film magazine mistook Dwight Frye for "Colin Clive".

Roger Hart Chicago, Illinois



And last issue you typeset Frye's name "Frey"! These are the all-too-frequent frustrations, for every magazine, in trying to get issues out on schedule.

That page of artwork reprinted from Capt. Marvel left me hanging. Who drew it? As for YOUR work in the issue, it was excellent. But let's examine the little adventures. You on chair swings into view of Altron-Boy; rescue sword and thereby loose a strange of surprise; he defeats A-0 in swordsmanship, but hits him with fire. Then the warrior pays no mind to his surroundings as he tries to slay A-0... Anyway, thanks for the treasures you are giving your fans.

Johnny Carlesimo Brooklyn, N.Y.

So the guy was just overconfident! Wouldn't YOU be, facing someone less than half your size? The artist you're wondering about was Mac Raboy.



I think your magazine is great. I'm getting a movie camera, and plan to make movies of my own. I hope you continue to do articles on this subject.

Mike Chastnut, Ga.

As long as fans continue to keep us informed of their projects, and can furnish us with clear (and large) photos that have been taken of their creative efforts, we will continue to publish the most interesting of them.

"The Original Captain Marvel" was one of the most entertaining and informative pictorial stories that I have ever had the pleasure to read. One can imagine the great amount of research that went into it. As for Altron-Boy, all I can say is that your stories and artwork get better each issue. The twist ending was very original and unique. The cover of #4 is by far the most appealing of the series. Anyone could easily see the painstaking amount of work that went into it. Your magazine has easily surpassed my former favorites, in both art and in pictorial articles.

Chris Lyman West Chester, Penn.

Everyone has to be a fault finder! (As you may have noticed, issue #5 had not as yet reached the stands as we were preparing this issue.)





Suggested placement for this title within completed collection of Burroughs novels

Number of book in Mars series

Total number of novels completed by Burroughs at this time



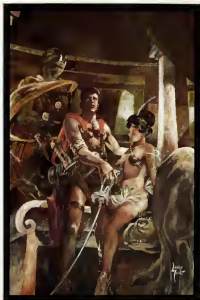
A
PRINCESS
OF
MARS



Edgar Rice
Burroughs

1911

PRINCESS OF MARS



Edgar Rice Burroughs

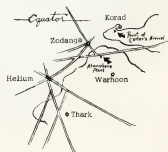


Edgar
Rice
Burroughs

A Princess of Mars was the first published novel by Edgar Rice Burroughs, and the first in an

eleven book series—the majority of which was written well after he had achieved fame as the author of the Tarzan series.

BELOW is the territory covered within the first book. (Only those cities mentioned by name are shown.)



The DREGS report... series is now complete

